

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions of claims in the application.

1. (Currently Amended) A sticking apparatus, comprising:

a label supply unit including a label feed-out reel mounted on a first mounting plate;

a drive unit mounted on a second mounting plate;

a label sticking unit which holds a label and is movable in the direction away from/closer to an adherend, said label sticking unit being attached to said drive unit; and

a space maintaining device which ensures that a distance between the label held by the label sticking unit and a surface of the adherend to be stuck with the label is within a preset distance,

wherein said space maintaining device is mounted on said label sticking unit and includes a contact member having a roller which is capable of rolling and changing position when the roller comes into contact with said surface of the adherend to be stuck with the label,

wherein said space maintaining device further includes a single sensor for detecting a position change of said contact member,

wherein said roller is located at a substantially central area of said label sticking unit, in a conveying direction of the adherend, and protrudes from a side end of said label sticking unit, such that the distance between the label held by the label sticking unit and a surface of the adherend to be stuck with the label is detected, and

wherein when the detected distance reaches the preset distance, said space maintaining device instructs the sticking apparatus to stop movement of the label sticking unit,

wherein said label sticking unit and said space maintaining device are movable relative to said first and second mounting plates, and

wherein said first and second mounting plates are stationary.

2-4. (Cancelled)

5. (Previously Presented) The sticking apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the label is held by said label sticking unit by suction and is released by blowing air.

6-7. (Cancelled).

8. (New) A sticking apparatus, comprising:

a label sticking unit which holds a label and is movable in the direction away from/closer to an adherend, and

a space maintaining device which ensures that a distance between the label held by the label sticking unit and a surface of the adherend to be stuck with the label is within a preset distance,

wherein said space maintaining device is mounted on said label sticking unit and includes a contact member having a roller which is capable of rolling and changing position when the roller comes into contact with said surface of the adherend to be stuck with label,

wherein said space maintaining device further includes a single sensor for detecting a position change of the contact member,

wherein said roller is located at a substantially central area of said label sticking unit, in a conveying direction of the adherend, and protrudes from a side end of said label sticking unit, and

wherein said space maintaining device stops moving of the label sticking unit when the distance is detected and the detected distance reaches to said preset distance.

9. (New) The sticking apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the label is held by said label sticking unit by suction and is released by blowing air.

10. (New) The sticking apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said roller is mounted on an arm which pivots in accordance with pressure on said roller, the arm having a first end which is detected by said sensor and a second end which supports said roller.

11. (New). The sticking apparatus according to claim 8, wherein said roller is mounted on an arm which pivots in accordance with pressure on said roller, the arm having a first end which is detected by said sensor and a second end which supports said roller.

12. (New). The sticking apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said arm is formed in an L-shape and said first end is biased in a detected position by a spring.

13. (New). The sticking apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said arm is formed in an L-shape and said first end is biased in a detected position by a spring.